

## Claims

### What is claimed is:

1. A lottery terminal apparatus, comprising:
  - a lottery input unit for receiving alphabetical game play information;
  - a display unit for visually displaying said received alphabetical game play information;
  - a value input device;
  - a controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,
    - said controller being programmed to receive wager data in response to a wager made by a person,
    - said controller being programmed to assign a prize value to the received alphabetical game play information,
    - said controller being programmed to randomly select an alphabetic sample, and determine a correlation between said alphabetic sample and said alphanumeric game play information, and
    - said controller being programmed to determine a payout value based on the correlation between said alphabetic sample and said alphanumeric game play information and said prize value.
2. The lottery terminal apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller is programmed to arrange said alphabetical game play information as words in a phrase.
3. The lottery terminal apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said lottery input unit comprises a lottery play slip reader for importing said alphabetical game play information coded onto a lottery play slip.
4. The lottery terminal apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said lottery input unit comprises a touch-screen device for receiving said alphabetical game play information as inputted by a user.

5. The lottery terminal apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said value input device is a card reader for accepting value information encoded onto a readable medium.
6. The lottery terminal apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said value input device is communicatively connected to a value acceptor and configured to accept value information communicated from said value acceptor.
7. The lottery terminal apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said memory stores a probability distribution indicative of the frequency at which each alphabetic character occurs.
8. The lottery terminal apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said probability distribution includes a wildcard that may be substituted for any one of the alphabetic characters.
9. A lottery game system comprising a plurality of lottery terminal apparatuses as defined in claim 1, said lottery terminal apparatuses being interconnected to form a network of lottery terminal apparatuses.
10. A lottery game system comprising first and second lottery terminal apparatuses as defined in claim 1,
  - wherein said first lottery terminal apparatus includes a first controller communicatively connected to a second controller included in said second lottery terminal apparatus, and
  - wherein said first controller is physically located within said first lottery terminal apparatus and is adapted to perform lottery functions within said second lottery terminal apparatus by communicating a plurality of lottery information to said second controller physically located within said second lottery terminal apparatus.

11. A network lottery game apparatus, comprising:
  - a display unit;
  - a value input device;
  - a controller operatively coupled to a network interface device, said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor;
    - said controller being programmed to receive wager data in response to a wager made by a person;
    - said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing a lottery game, wherein said lottery game is selected from the group consisting of keno, lotto, powerball, pick-3, pick-4 or a word-based game;
    - said controller being programmed to assign a prize value to a plurality of alphabetic indicia represented in said lottery game;
    - said controller being programmed to determine, after said video image has been displayed, a value payout associated with an outcome of said lottery game represented by said video image.
12. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 11, wherein said network interface device comprises a wireless networking device
13. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 12, wherein said wireless networking device is adapted to transmit lottery information on a secure wireless network comprising a plurality of network lottery game apparatuses.
14. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 11, wherein said controller is programmed to arrange said alphabetical indicia as words in a phrase.
15. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 11 further comprising a lottery play slip reader for importing said alphabetical indicia coded onto a lottery play slip.

16. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 11 wherein said display unit comprises a touch-screen device for receiving said alphabetical indicia as inputted by a user.

17. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 11, wherein said value input device comprises a card reader for accepting value information encoded onto a readable medium.

18. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 11, wherein said value input device is communicatively connected to an value acceptor and configured to accept value information communicated from said value acceptor.

19. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 11, wherein said controller is programmed to assign each alphabetic indicia to a probability distribution indicative of the frequency at which the alphabetic indicia occurs.

20. The network lottery game apparatus as defined in claim 19, wherein said probability distribution further comprises a wildcard that may be substituted for any one of the alphabetic indicia.

21. A method of playing a word-based lottery game comprising:  
storing an alphabetic play phrase having a plurality of words defined by a plurality of characters;  
assigning a prize value to each of the words in the play phrase;  
randomly selecting at least one alphabetic indicia from a plurality of similar alphabetic indicia;  
matching said at least one alphabetic indicia to the plurality of characters defining said words; and  
determining a win status based on the number of matching alphabetic indicia and the plurality of characters.

22. The method of playing a word-based lottery game of claim 21, wherein said plurality of characters are based on a letter distribution.

23. The method of playing a word-based lottery game of claim 21 further comprising defining a price point at which the word based lottery game is to be played.

24. The method of playing a word-based lottery game of claim 21 further comprising defining a percentage return to determine the amount of said price point to be award to players.

25. The method of playing a word-based lottery game of claim 21 further comprising defining a sample size of the number of alphabetic indicia to be drawn during a round of word based lottery game play.

26. The method of playing a word based lottery game 21, wherein storing the alphabetic play phrase further comprises storing a predefined list of play phrases.

27. The method of playing a word-based lottery game of claim 21 wherein storing the alphabetic play phrase further comprises storing a custom play phrase before beginning a round of word based lottery game play.

28. The method of playing a word-based lottery game of claim 21, wherein storing the alphabetic play phrase further comprises storing a predefined play phrase represented on a preprinted game card.